

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 24, 1998

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JULY 2, 1998

SENATE BILL

No. 2030

Introduced by Senator Costa

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Aroner)

(Coauthor: Senator Solis)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members ~~Washington~~ Ashburn, Kuehl,
Machado, Migden, Thomson, Washington, and Woods)

February 20, 1998

An act to add Section 10609.5 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to child welfare services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 2030, as amended, Costa. Child welfare services: funding: study.

Existing law provides for the administration of various child welfare services pursuant to regulations and procedures adopted by the State Department of Social Services.

This bill would require the department to contract with an appropriate and qualified entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of current child welfare services budgeting methodology, and would require the department to report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by January 30, 2000.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The safety of children is the paramount goal of the child welfare services system.

(b) The existing approach to budgeting and funding child welfare services was established over 15 years ago, and it is in the best interest of children for the Legislature to find out if the system is outdated and inappropriate as a means of adequately funding the program today.

(c) Numerous and significant changes in child welfare services policy and practice, as well as demographic and societal changes over the past 15 years, have dramatically affected the workload demands of the current system and its ability to deliver high quality child welfare services. Some of these changes include:

(1) An explosion in the number of children at risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation due to substance abuse in families.

(2) An overall increase in the number and complexity of stresses on vulnerable families, and a corresponding rise in the level of dysfunction in the families and children in need of child welfare services.

(3) Over a decade of new state and federal laws and regulations that have impacted the workload demands of the system.

(4) The implementation of promising advances and innovation in child welfare services practice and delivery at the local level, such as family conferencing and wrap-around services.

(5) The implementation of the child welfare services case management system.

(d) These changes and many others have contributed to a serious need for a reevaluation of California's methodology for budgeting and funding the child welfare services system.

SEC. 2. Section 10609.5 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

10609.5. (a) The department shall contract with an appropriate and qualified entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of the current child welfare services budgeting methodology and make recommendations for revising the budgeting methodology, including appropriate caseload levels, supportive services, and preventative services, in order to accurately and adequately fund the system. This evaluation shall, at a minimum, consider the impact of the following factors on the budgeting methodology:

(1) The current state and federal statutory and regulatory environment for child welfare services.

(2) The state of the art advancements and best child welfare practice, such as family conferencing and wrap-around services.

(3) The impact of the child welfare services case management system on the workload of workers in the system.

(4) The nature and degree of the problems experienced by families in need of child welfare services, and the service needs of abused and neglected children and their families.

(5) The impact on workload of obtaining timely medical, mental health, educational, and developmental assessments of children in the child welfare system, and coordinating with other systems to meet the children's needs.

(b) The department shall convene an advisory group that shall include representatives of the County Welfare Directors Association, the California State Association of Counties, child welfare services consumers, children's advocacy organizations, and child welfare social worker organizations. The advisory group shall do both of the following:

(1) Provide oversight over the process of ~~selection of~~ *selecting* an entity to conduct an evaluation under subdivision (a).

(2) Provide oversight over, and technical assistance to, the entity selected to conduct the evaluation under subdivision (a).

1 (c) The department shall report the findings and
2 recommendations of the evaluation to the appropriate
3 policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature no later
4 than January 30, 2000.

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